

# Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 16 May 1991

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IAN CASTLES  
Australian Statistician

## Unemployment still rising sharply despite more part-time work

The April 1991 labour force survey recorded the largest rise in unemployment since the monthly survey commenced in 1978. The unemployment rate also rose sharply to a level just below 10 per cent.

The April results were also notable for the first monthly increase in employment (seasonally adjusted) since December 1990, despite a continuing decline in the number of persons employed full time.

The seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons rose by 10,800 to 7,721,000, but total full-time employment fell below 6 million for the first time since September 1988. For males, full-time employment fell by 28,200 while part-time employment rose by 16,700. Female full-time employment rose by 17,000 and female part-time employment rose by 5,200.

Trend estimates of full-time employment for males and females aged 15-19 continue the strong decline of recent months. For adults employed full time, trend estimates are also decreasing. Trend estimates of total full-time employment have been falling since July 1990.

LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES  
Seasonally adjusted

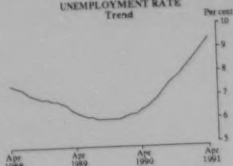
	Employed			Un- employed	Unemploy- ment rate — per cent —	Participation rate — per cent —
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total			
	— '000 —					
1990 — December	6,169.2	1,676.8	7,846.0	690.3	8.1	63.8
1991 — January	6,137.4	1,665.8	7,823.2	712.1	8.3	63.7
February	6,065.2	1,727.4	7,792.5	738.3	8.7	63.6
March	6,007.5	1,702.6	7,710.1	777.1	9.2	63.2
April	5,996.4	1,724.6	7,721.0	844.0	9.9	63.7

The seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons rose by 66,900 to 844,000. The main components of the increase were rises of 38,600 in the number of males seeking full-time work and 21,200 in the number of females seeking full-time work.

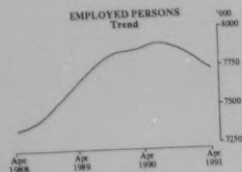
The unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, for April 1991 rose by 0.7 percentage points to 9.9 per cent. For males, the unemployment rate rose by 0.8 percentage points to 10.3 per cent, the highest rate recorded by the survey. For females, the rate rose by 0.5 percentage points to 9.3 per cent.

In April 1991, the seasonally adjusted labour force participation rate rose by 0.5 percentage points to 63.7 per cent. The male participation rate rose by 0.4 percentage points to 75.4 per cent and the female participation rate rose by 0.6 percentage points to 52.3 per cent.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE  
Trend



EMPLOYED PERSONS  
Trend



The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for each State is shown in the table below.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE  
Seasonally adjusted  
Per cent

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	Aust.
1990 — December	7.4	7.9	9.3	8.5	8.5	9.3	8.1
1991 — January	7.4	8.4	9.1	9.3	9.0	9.2	8.3
February	7.9	8.3	9.6	8.9	9.8	9.6	8.7
March	8.3	9.2	10.2	9.4	10.3	9.6	9.2
April	8.6	10.5	10.7	10.3	11.1	10.8	9.9

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia*, Preliminary (6202.0), or contact Don Clark (06) 252 6525.

## Tourist industry boosts capacity

The number of rooms available in hotels, motels and guest houses Australia-wide increased by 7.7 per cent between December quarter 1989 and December quarter 1990. Increases were recorded in every State and Territory, and in all star gradings except the 'one-star' category.

However, because room nights sold increased by only 2.8 per cent over the same period, the room occupancy rate fell from 52.9 to 50.3 per cent.

Guest arrivals increased only marginally by 0.4 per cent, with decreases being recorded in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, while all other States and Territories experienced increases. Average length of stay increased from 1.9 to 2.0 days, resulting in an increase in guest nights of 5.7 per cent.

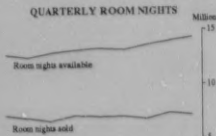
Takings from accommodation increased by 9.9 per cent from \$532 million to \$585 million, while the average takings per room night sold rose by 6.9 per cent from \$76 to \$81. During this same period, the Consumer Price Index increased by 6.9 per cent.

TOURIST ACCOMMODATION  
Hotels, motels and guest houses

	December quarter		Change
	1989	1990	
Rooms available ('000)	146	157	7.7%
Room nights sold ('000)	7,010	7,204	2.8%
Room occupancy rate (%)	52.9	50.3	—
Guest arrivals ('000)	6,297	6,322	0.4%
Average length of stay (days)	1.9	2.0	5.3%
Takings from accommodation (\$m)	532	585	9.9%

TOURIST ACCOMMODATION  
Hotels, motels and guest houses

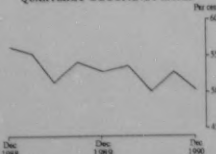
QUARTERLY ROOM NIGHTS



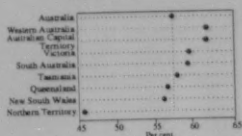
QUARTERLY TAKINGS FROM  
ACCOMMODATION



QUARTERLY OCCUPANCY RATES



PERSONS USUALLY USING SUNSCREEN  
October 1989 to March 1990



## First results of national health survey

Nearly 80 per cent of the Australian population aged 18 years or more felt they were in good or excellent health around the end of 1989. While only 5 per cent said they were in poor health, two out of three persons reported they experienced a long-term medical condition, the most common being long or short sight, hayfever, asthma and arthritis.

These findings are preliminary estimates from the 1989-90 survey of national health, and mark the start of the output phase of Australia's major health survey. The estimates are based on information obtained during the first six months of the twelve month collection period from October 1989.

Almost three out of ten persons aged 18 years and over said that they smoked. There was a marked difference between the sexes and across age groups as shown in the table below.

PERSONS WHO SMOKE  
OCTOBER 1989 TO MARCH 1990  
Per cent

Sex	Age group (years)			Total
	18-34	35-64	65 and over	
Males	38	32	17	32
Females	34	23	10	25
Persons	36	29	13	29

About one fifth of the population had consulted a doctor and 70 per cent reported using medications in the two weeks prior to interview. About half the population reported using pain relievers and almost a third took vitamins or minerals during the previous two weeks.

Almost 60 per cent of people usually use a sunscreen on areas of unprotected skin when they are out in strong sun. A further 8 per cent reported they are either usually fully protected by clothing or not exposed.

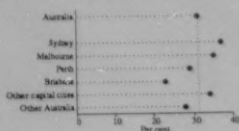
The survey also found that nearly two out of three persons aged 18 years or more drank alcohol in the seven days prior to interview. The most popular beverages consumed by drinkers were full-strength beer (48%) and wine (42%).

Preliminary results for the spring and summer period show that two out of three persons aged 15 years or more reported doing some exercise for recreation, sport or fitness in the two weeks prior to interview. Of those persons who exercised, two thirds went walking for exercise or recreation. One third of both males and females reported no exercise.

Further results of the survey will be available when final estimates are released in the publication 1989-90 National Health Survey: Summary of Results (4363.0) expected in early June. Details of all proposed publications and other releases of survey results are contained in the information brochure 1989-90 National Health Survey: Products and Services which is available from any office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (see page 6). For further information, order the publication 1989-90 National Health Survey, Preliminary Estimates (4361.0), or contact Brian Richings on (06) 252 5786.

## First home buyers a third of Sydney, Melbourne markets

FIRST HOME BUYERS, 1988-1990  
As a proportion of buyers



First home buyers were over a third of all purchasers in the Sydney and Melbourne home markets between 1988 and 1990. Sydney had both the greatest number, 57,200, and the highest proportion of first home buyers, at 37 per cent. Melbourne's 55,600 first home buyers were 35 per cent of the market.

First home buyers were 31 per cent of all buyers nationally during that period. First home buyer households in Australia had a median income of about \$41,000 during this period, and the median price of dwellings they purchased was around \$85,000.

These figures emerged from the first ABS survey to target first home buyers. Australia-wide, the survey estimates that 290,200 dwellings were purchased by first home buyers during the three years from 1988 to 1990.

This survey, conducted in March 1991 is part of a larger national survey of income and housing. Data available on first home buyers includes their household income, purchase price of dwelling, size and main source of deposit, source of main loan, and total value of loans taken out to finance the dwelling purchase.

For example, banks financed 55 per cent of first home buyers' purchases, 160,400 dwellings, during those three years. There were 24,400 dwellings purchased outright by first home buyers who did not need any loans.

The survey found that households' savings contributed the deposit for 72 per cent of first home buyers' dwellings. Money provided by family or friends helped pay the deposit on 10 per cent of first homes purchased.

FIRST HOME BUYERS  
1988-1990

Particulars	Statistical division				Other capital cities	Other Australia	Australia
	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Perth			
— '000 —							
Dwellings purchased	57.2	55.6	19.3	24.1	29.8	104.1	290.2
— Per cent —							
Proportion of total buyers	37	35	23	29	34	28	31

The survey results are found in the free publication *First Home Buyers 1988-90, Australia, Preliminary* (4135.0). For more details, including unpublished data, or to discuss the range of information regarding first home buyers that will become available, contact David Groube from the ABS Housing Statistics Unit on (06) 252 5508.

## Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- ☐ through its bookshops
- ☐ by mail order (including subscription)
- ☐ by facsimile
- ☐ electronically.

To order any of the publications that appear in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

### ABS Central Office

- ☒ PO BOX 10  
BELCONNEN ACT 2616
- ☎ (06) 252 6627  
FAX (06) 253 1404

### ABS State Offices

- ☎ NSW (02) 268 4611  
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### Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

Robert Nixon  
Editor  
*Statistics Weekly*  
(06) 252 6104

## All the week's releases: 8 to 14 May

### General

Publications Issued in April 1991 (1102.0; \$5.50)

Statistics Weekly, 9 May 1991 (1318.0; \$4.00)

Western Aust.: Facts and Figures, 1991 (1302.5; \$8.95)

### Social statistics

National Health Survey: Preliminary Estimates, 1989-90 (4361.0; free)  
— *new issue*

### National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Imports, Aust., Monthly Summary Tables, March 1991 (5433.0; \$9.00)

### Labour statistics and prices

The Labour Force, Aust., April 1991, Preliminary (6202.0; \$10.00)

The Labour Force, Aust. — Preliminary Data on Floppy Disk, April 1991 (6271.0; \$65.00)

Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Aust., March 1991 (6312.0; \$10.00)

### Secondary industry and distribution

Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Food, Drink, Tobacco, Stock and Poultry Food, February 1991 (8359.0; \$10.00)

Tourist Accommodation, Aust., December Qtr 1990 (8635.0; \$10.00)

Production Statistics, NSW, February 1991 (8304.1; \$7.50)

Tourist Accommodation, NSW, December Qtr 1990 (8635.1; \$10.00)

Tourist Accommodation, Qld, December Qtr 1990 (8635.3; \$14.50)

Building Approvals, Qld, March 1991 (8731.3; \$10.00)

Manufacturing, WA, 1988-89 (8207.5; \$12.50) — *new issue*

Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, SA, February 1991 (8741.4; \$10.00)

Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Tas., February 1991 (8741.6; \$3.50)

### Transport

Road Traffic Accidents Involving Casualties, Reported to the Police Department, WA, 1989 (9406.5; \$8.00) — *final issue*

Motor Vehicle Registrations, Tas., March 1991 (9303.6; \$5.00)

## Calendar of key releases

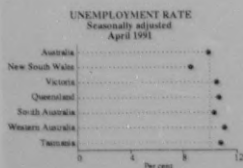
Expected releases over the fortnight to 21 May 1991

### May

- 15** Consumer Price Index, March 1991 (6401.0; \$11.00)
- 20** Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, March 1991 (5609.0; \$10.00)
- 22** Export Price Index, Australia, March 1991 (6405.0; \$7.50)  
Retail Trade, Australia, March 1991 (8501.0; \$10.00)
- 24** Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, March 1991 (6407.0; \$10.00)  
Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, March 1991 (6408.0; \$7.50)
- 27** Company Profits, Australia, March 1991 (5651.0; \$10.00)  
Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, March 1991 (6412.0; \$10.00)  
Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, April 1991 Preliminary (9301.0; \$10.00)
- 28** Manufacturing Production, Australia, April 1991 Preliminary (8301.0; \$10.00)

## The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to  
14 May 1991



	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (Dec. qtr 90)*	-2.4	-28.6	-15.3	-11.7	2.8	39.0	n.a.	n.a.	-8.6
Retail turnover (Feb. 91) (trend estimate)	3.4	-2.4	4.6	8.8	2.2	6.3	n.a.	9.5	2.8
New motor vehicle registrations (Mar. 91)†	-20.2	-58.9	-9.0	-13.7	-20.5	-28.0	-29.3	-24.1	-29.8
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Mar. 91)	-19.7	-40.7	-10.4	9.2	-23.0	-12.7	-25.9	-75.6	-20.7
Value of total building work done (Dec. qtr 90)	2.5	-11.1	-23.0	9.6	-25.5	-24.7	11.4	5.3	-8.5
Employed persons (Apr. 91)*	0.6	-6.1	-1.6	-0.3	-1.4	-2.0	0.8	3.9	-1.8
Capital city consumer price index (Dec. qtr 90)	6.4	7.4	6.2	7.8	7.4	6.1	7.1	6.8	6.9
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (Nov. 90)	6.8	7.1	9.9	8.3	7.9	6.6	9.8	8.7	7.5
Population (Sept. 90)	1.1	1.4	2.4	1.1	2.3	1.1	0.9	2.5	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc (Dec. qtr 90)	-2.3	0.9	8.0	-0.7	0.3	29.3	32.8	4.6	2.8

\* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.

## Key national indicators – consolidated to 14 May 1991

			Period	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
				Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
<b>National production</b>							
Gross domestic product	— current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 90	101,082	95,247	1.3	3.4
	— 1984-85 prices			70,031	64,725	0.6	0.6
<b>Industrial activity</b>							
New capital expenditure	— current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 90	7,305	6,612	3.2	-10.6
	— 1984-85 prices			5,542	5,021	3.6	-10.3
Expected new capital expenditure		"	Three months to Dec. 90	8,311	n.a.	n.a.	-5.7
Retail turnover	— current prices	"	Feb. 91	6,365	7,250	0.1	3.5
	— 1984-85 prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	16,480	14,520	-1.6	-1.6
New motor vehicle registrations		no.	Mar. 91	39,880	39,077	-9.4	-29.8
Dwelling unit approvals		"	Mar. 91	9,770	10,210	-2.5	-13.0
Value of all building approvals		\$m		1,522	1,623	-26.6	-19.3
Value of total building work done	— current prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	7,391	7,069	0.5	-8.5
	— 1984-85 prices	"		4,654	4,452	0.1	-10.9
Manufacturers' sales	— current prices	"	Dec. qtr 90	36,754	35,064	1.0	-1.0
	— 1984-85 prices	"		25,318	24,154	0.0	-3.0
Expected manufacturers' sales		"	Six months to June 91	70,139	n.a.	n.a.	-1.8
<b>Labour</b>							
Employed persons		'000	Apr. 91	7,750.5	7,721.0	0.1	-1.8
Unemployment rate †		%	"	9.9	9.9	0.7	3.6
Participation rate †		"	"	64.0	63.7	0.5	0.2
Job vacancies		'000	Nov. 90	34.1	35.4	-27.8	-45.6
Average weekly overtime per employee		hours	"	1.3	1.3	-1.9	-16.2
<b>Prices, profits and wages</b>							
Consumer price index (c)	1980-81 = 100.0		Dec. qtr 90	214.5	n.a.	2.7	6.9
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0		Feb. 91	121.5	n.a.	-3.3	0.6
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1988-89 = 100.0		Feb. 91	119.3	n.a.	-0.5	4.0
Company profits before income tax		\$m	Dec. qtr 90	4,640	3,911	15.9	4.8
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)		\$	Nov. 90	555.60	n.a.	2.7	7.5
<b>Interest rates (b) (monthly average)</b>							
90-day bank bills †	% per annum		Mar. 91	11.60	n.a.	-0.05	-3.85
10-year Treasury bonds †				11.40	n.a.	0.15	-2.05
<b>Balance of payments</b>							
Exports of merchandise		\$m	Mar. 91	4,300	4,477	1.2	13.5
Imports of merchandise		"	"	3,658	3,862	-9.6	-11.8
Balance on merchandise trade (c)		"	"	642	615	299.4	n.a.
Balance of goods and services (c)		"	"	388	231	n.a.	n.a.
Balance on current account (c)		"	"	-1,148	-1,209	16.7	42.0
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0		Dec. qtr 90	n.a.	97.9	-2.8	-9.3
<b>Foreign investment</b>							
Net foreign debt		\$m	30 Dec. 90	130,889	n.a.	1.5	5.9
Net foreign liabilities				173,678	n.a.	0.2	6.0
<b>Exchange rates (monthly average)</b>							
US\$	per \$A		Mar. 91	0.7719	n.a.	-1.6	2.1
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0			58.2	n.a.	1.6	-2.2
<b>Other indicators</b>							
Population (resident at end of qtr)	million		Sep. 90	17.1	n.a.	0.4	1.5
Overseas visitor arrivals (e)	'000		Oct. 90	191	188	-1.4	12.9

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Later figures expected to be released Wednesday, 15 May 1991.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 6).

Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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